

THE INDIAN NATIONS.

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prevented from getting at the corpse; when time and circumstances do not permit this, as, for instance, when the Indians are travelling, the body is enclosed in the bark of trees and thus laid in the grave. When a death takes place at their hunting camps, they make a kind of coffin as well as they can, or put a cover over the body, so that the earth may not sink on it, and then enclose the grave with a fence of poles. 764
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Warriors that are slain in battle, are, if possible, drawn aside and buried, so that the enemy may not get their scalps, and also that he may not know the number of the slain. In such cases, they will turn an old log out of its bed, and dig a grave so deep, that the log, when replaced, may not press too hard upon the body. If any of the fresh earth be seen, they cover it with rotten wood, brush or leaves, that its place may not be found. If they have not sufficient time for this, or the number of their dead is too great, they throw the bodies on the top of each other between large logs, and place any kind of rotten wood or other rubbish upon them. They never, when they can help it, leave their dead to be devoured by wild beasts. 727
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When the Indians have to speak of a deceased person, they never mention him or her by name, lest they should renew the grief of the family or friends. They say, "He who was our counsellor or chief," "She who was the wife of our friend;" or they will allude to some particular circumstance, as that of the deceased having been with them at a particular time or place, or having done some particular act or spoken particular words which they all remember, so that every body knows who is meant. I have often observed with emotion this remarkable delicacy, which certainly does honour to their hearts, and shews that they are naturally accessible to the tenderest feelings of humanity. 551
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OF THE DELAWARE INDIANS

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deceased was oriented towards the east.⁹⁸ At this time they laid "two thin poles of about four inches (in) diameter, from which the bark had been taken off, lengthways and close together over the grave, after which they retired."⁹⁹ The widower then came up to the grave slowly and "walked over it on these poles, and proceeded forward in the same manner into an extensive adjoining prairie."¹⁰⁰ When he was gone, a painted post which signified the position and station of the deceased and her husband was "brought by two men and delivered to a third, a man of note,"¹⁰¹ who placed it at the head of the coffin in the grave with its symbolism facing east.¹⁰² Holm said, "If he was a good hunter, they put the figure in wood, of some wild animal, and if he was a good fisherman, that of a fish."¹⁰³ After the grave was filled with earth, palisades were set up "about breast-high, so as to secure it from... wild beasts."¹⁰⁴ Denton noted that "...they fence their graves with a hedge, & cover the tops with mats, to shelter them from the rain."¹⁰⁵

A meal, which had been prepared some distance from the grave, and a distribution of presents concluded the funeral rites. Everybody received a gift, although those who had performed various duties received the most valuable presents. Food was placed on the grave at dusk, and this was repeated every evening for three weeks. After this span of time "it was supposed that the traveller had found her place of residence."¹⁰⁶ For three weeks the mourning of the women continued, although it gradually decreased in intensity.

People of less social importance were given less elaborate funerals.¹⁰⁷ No matter how simple the funerary rites, however, the customs of mourning had to be observed. Blackening of the face is one of the few such customs with which we are familiar.¹⁰⁸ Denton's description is the most complete one available for the seventeenth century. He said:

At his Burial his nearest relations attend the Hearse with their faces painted black, and do visit the grave once or twice a day, where they send forth sad lamentations so long till time hath wore the blackness off their faces, & afterwards every year once they view the grave, make a new mourning for him, trimming up of the Grave, not suffering of a Grass to grow by it....¹⁰⁹

A number of other sources from all periods confirm the care which was given the grave.¹¹⁰ Food was occasionally left there, and annual feasts at the grave were common.¹¹¹ Trowbridge said that "it is customary among them to offer the first fine products of the hunting season and the first fruits of the earth at the grave of the deceased."¹¹² My informants said that Munsie feasts were more elaborate and that one was held twelve

⁹⁸Zeisberger, 1910, p. 88; O.A., N.D., J.T., M.B.

⁹⁹Heckewelder, 1881, p. 273.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*

¹⁰²McClure, 1899, p. 90; Trowbridge MS.

¹⁰³Holm, 1834, p. 143.

¹⁰⁴Heckewelder, 1881, p. 274.

¹⁰⁵Denton, 1845, p. 8.

¹⁰⁶Heckewelder, 1881, p. 275.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*; Trowbridge MS.

¹⁰⁸Pastorius, 1912, p. 435; Penn, 1912, p. 234; Holm, 1834, p. 143.

¹⁰⁹Denton, 1845, p. 8.

¹¹⁰Thomas, 1912, p. 340; Penn, 1912, p. 234; Zeisberger, 1910, p. 90; J.T., O.A.

¹¹¹Penn, 1912, p. 234; Zeisberger, 1910, p. 90; J.T., O.A.

¹¹²Trowbridge MS.

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776 offerings are then regarded by God as rendered to him. It is
 782 clear enough that the Indians, professing to worship God and
 bringing sacrifices to him, serve Satan, who influences their
 dreams, and keeps them in slavery in this wise, for the Indians
 consider dreams to be of great importance and nothing less than
 revelations from God. It is indeed true as the Apostle says, 1
 Cor. 10:20, "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sac-
 rifice to the devils and not to God." Those among the Indians
 who have been converted recognize this and henceforth hold
 the Indian sacrifices and offerings to be vain and do not care
 to say much about them.

• 769 To the spirits of the dead they offer both meat and drink-
 offerings. If it is to be a meat offering, which the doctors must
 decide in case of illness or accident, either a hog or a bear is
 killed for a feast and guests are invited. The latter assemble
 in the house where the sacrifice is to be offered. An old man
 gives part of the meal to the enraged spirits, speaks with them,
 and begs them to be pacified. All this is done in the dark; there
 must be neither fire nor light. After the old man has communed
 with the spirits he tells the guests that they have been appeased.

If it is to be a drink offering rum is required. Guests are
 invited also. They drink together and some one speaks with
 the spirits and pacifies them. The guests walk to the grave and
 pour some rum upon it. Such sacrifices are very common among
 them, and are arranged even upon very trivial occasions. In
 case of a tooth-ache or head-ache, they imagine that the spirits
 are displeased and must be pacified by an offering.

765 Every woman whose child dies in a foreign land travels,
 if possible, once a year to the place of its burial, taking another
 woman with her, and offers a drink-offering upon its grave.

776 The hare is regarded as a great God and they bring offer-
 773 ings to it. The name of one of the twins born to the woman
 that was thrown from heaven was *Tschimammus*, that is, hare.
 He made the land upon which the Indians dwell and was their
 ancestor. Now he is said to dwell in heaven, for many Indians
 who have been there have seen him and spoken to him and to
 them he has declared that he would come again.

GHOSTS—MEDIUMS	55
no means confined to them. Among the Minsi formerly they were accustomed to hold meetings in the burial grounds at certain times, when some medium, it is said, would communicate with the spirits. The late James Wolf, one of the principal Minsi informants, was said to have this power. One time a man was drowned in the Thames river near Munceytown in Ontario, and the body could not be located. Wolf, it is said, walked up and down the river-banks, with a companion, talking to the water. At last a strange sound was heard, and Wolf stopped. "That was the dead man's spirit," he said; "the body lies right over in that hole." Surely enough, when they procured a boat, they found the body in the hole, wedged beneath a sunken log. Certain regular ceremonies were held by both the Unami and the Minsi in honor of the dead, and will be discussed in a later paper.	775 787 769 ●
AND MONOGRAPHS	

6:Harrington E-5 (1907-1910)1921
 NM7 Delaware NM7
 Lenape

SKELETON DANCE	183
hide stretched over poles. They do not use the same step in the dance, but gallop like buffaloes and bellow like them, also have horns on their heads and occasionally hook at each other. The dance is usually given before starting on a chase." IMPORTED CEREMONIES SKELETON DANCE The preceding ceremonies have all been, ostensibly at least, of native Lenape origin, but we now come to several whose outside origin is admitted by the Indians themselves. The most ancient of these is the "Human Skeleton Dance," mentioned by Adams.⁶⁰ He calls it a rite belonging to the Wolf clan or phratry of the Delawares, but the writer's informants say that it is not true Lenape at all, but a Nanticoke (One'tko) ceremony introduced among the Lenape by the survivors of that tribe who had joined forces with them. Adams' account, which is better than any the writer was able to obtain, is as follows: "<i>Human Skeleton Dance</i>.—Given only by the Wolf clan of the Delawares. A	224 796^x 177 769●
AND MONOGRAPHS	

6:Harrington E-5 (1907-1910) 1921
NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape

184	LENAPE
177 ● 769 [773]	certain dance given as a memorial to the dead was supposed to clear a way for the spirit of the deceased to the spirit land. When a member of the Wolf clan died, the flesh was stripped from the bones and buried, and the bones were dried at some private place. At the end of 12 days the skeleton would be wrapped in white buckskin and taken to a place prepared for the dance and there held up by some one. As the singers would sing the men who held the skeleton would shake it and the bones would rattle as the dancers would proceed around it. After the dance the skeleton was buried. Traditions say that in ancient times some of the head men in the Wolf clan had a dream that they must treat their dead in that way, and the custom has been handed down to them for many centuries. The other clans say the custom does not belong to them. The custom has been long dropped. There has not been a skeleton dance since 1860."
	INDIAN NOTES

6:Harrington E-5 (1907-1910) 1921
 NM7 Delaware NM7
 Lenape

190	LENAPE
177 276 796^x	man, who takes his spirit on a wonderful journey along the "peyote road," eastward toward the sun. At daybreak they all file out of the tipi bearing their paraphernalia, as seen in pl. ix, b, and when the sun appears they raise their hands in salutation, and then those who are left standing (for some fall as if dead at the sight of the sun) "give thanks to the Great Father in Heaven." Those who fall at sunrise, they say, are the ones who visited the sun in their visions. All sleep, or at least rest, until about noon, when a feast is served, after which everyone tells what he or she saw while "on the peyote road." The Lenape variant of this ceremony, as related above, differs somewhat from that of other tribes practising the Christian form of the Peyote rite, but in all essentials it is almost identical. GHOST DANCE The Ghost dance was also introduced among the Lenape by an Indian named Wilson, about the same time, our infor-
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GHOST DANCE	191
mants thought, as the Peyote rite, and, like it, probably from the Washita River region. Wilson would call a dance every now and then during his lifetime, at which the people appeared in their everyday dress, without such special costumes as were seen, for instance, at such functions among the Kiowa and the Arapaho. At these meetings the participants would dance round and round for a long time, with a sidewise step, to the sound of song and water-drum, sometimes for a considerable period without stopping. Occasionally one would fall and appear to faint, and when revived would claim to have visited Heaven in spirit while his body lay as if dead. When Wilson died, the cult, so far as the Delawares were concerned, perished with him. Such were the ceremonies surviving until recent times among the Lenape, from which have been omitted only the observances connected with the dead, shamanism, witchcraft, and war, all of which will be discussed in later papers.	177 769● 796^x [787]
AND MONOGRAPHS	

- 769 The Delawares have assimilated the Munsee custom of the family giving a feast one year from the date of death of its members. One or more deceased members of the same family

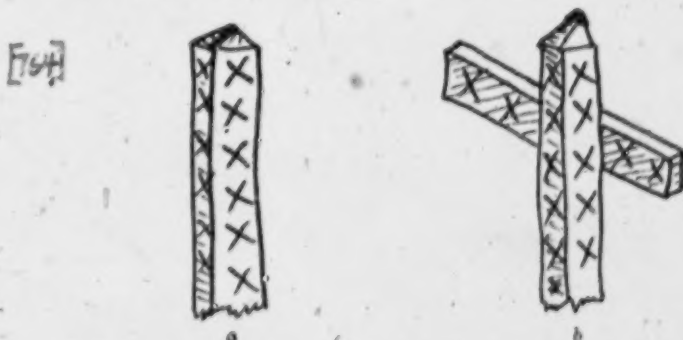


FIG. 5. GRAVE POSTS AT HEAD OF MAN'S GRAVE (a) AND WOMAN'S (b), about two feet high.

may be remembered at this time, each one being represented by an invited person selected from another group (Wolf, Turtle or Turkey) or someone who is not related to the deceased by blood. Those representing the deceased need not necessarily be of corresponding sex. The person who is giving the feast, which is usually held at night, announces that he has invited the guests present to eat in memory of the departed member or members of his family. On such occasions the invited guests are served first. The food, which may be of various sorts, is equally divided and what is left the guests may take home in the vessels which it is customary to bring to such feasts for that purpose. A certain amount of food is set aside for the members of the family who eat after the guests have been served. Sometimes the person who sponsors the ceremony will give one of the guests a pint of liquor (or "sacred wine" as the informant called it) as a sacramental token. This he may dispose of as he chooses.⁶

- 764 A most complete description of a Delaware funeral is given by the missionary John Heckewelder, eye-witness to the burial of a woman of high rank in 1762, the wife of a war-chief, Shingask. The essential features of the event

⁶ G. Tantaquidgeon, "Delaware Notes," 1930.

764 tected by a covering of the same before throwing in the earth. At the grave one of the relatives renders thanks to the bystanders for their assistance and the mourners return home.

765 For six days after the interment the near relatives visit the grave twice in each day; once at the break of day, and again at the going down of the sun. In the latter case they frequently remain until late at night. They seat themselves upon the grave, and not a word is spoken, but each is bowed down to the ground [178] in perfect silence. These visits are said to be made to the deceased who may not have set out upon his journey to the land of spirits and would of course like company during his stay.

They have no particular ceremony of mourning except that they abstain from games, dances and other amusements for twelve days, which by the husband or wife of a deceased person is continued for nine months, at the end of which time the relatives of the partner of this chief mourner make and present to him or her a new suit of clothes and formally pronounce their willingness for another marriage. They never paint themselves during the mourning season, as is the custom among the Chippeway's, but they divest themselves of all unnecessary apparel and of their ornaments, and suffer their hair to flow loosely about their necks.

● 769 It is customary among them to offer the first fine products of
765 the hunting season and the first fruits of the earth at the grave of the deceased. The meat or vegetables being cooked are carried thither by the relatives and a guest not connected with the deceased, is invited to eat that portion which would have been his if living. Silence is preserved during the feast and when it is finished the guest addresses the deceased in a kind of prayer, assuring him (or her) of the extreme regret of the friends left behind and imploring him to rest satisfied with the great change and not to return for the purpose of taking away any of the remaining relatives. Mr. Conner once saw the sister of a chief buried upon the banks of White River and this prayer was addressed to her by her brother, before the earth was thrown upon the body. They sometimes omit the ceremony of the feast at the grave, after a short time, but it has been known to continue for years, and is often renewed upon the appearance of any mis-

fortune which can be attributed to the malignant spirit of the deceased. ⁷⁶⁹765

They never burn the bodies of the deceased persons, nor do ⁷⁶⁴they take up the bones for reinterment. They say that the Nanticokes were in the habit of placing the body of the deceased upon a scaffold, where it was suffered to remain until the flesh decayed, when the friends and relatives assembled to pay the last duties to the bones. At this time a dance, called the Spirit dance, took place, in which they had the figure of a human being drawn upon a skin which was stretched over a hoop and suspended in the air. Under this figure sat the singers who continued their songs all the night, for if one of them thro' indolence or excessive fatigue stopped his song, it was an indication of his speedy death. The day succeeding the dance the friends assembled again at the same spot and large presents were distributed by one of the near relatives of the deceased. This man held in his hand a small ball, and placing himself in the midst of a circle formed by the spectators he would pretend to make frequent attempts to throw the ball out of the ring. At length he would throw it where it was least expected, and he who was so fortunate as to catch it received a portion of the presents. This was repeated until all the goods were given out, and at each return of the ball the figure on the skin was made to bow to it. After the distribution of the goods the bones were collected, put into a kind of box and buried in the ground. If a death happened at a distance from the village, as in hunting or on a journey, the flesh was separated from the bones by cutting, the bones were burned until they became perfectly dry and then transported to the place of burial, where the same ceremonies took place.

As Mr. Heckewelder has said, many ceremonies take place at the interment of a distinguished personage, which are not common on other occasions; such are distributing presents, feasting etc.; but the general customs are such as have been here related. [776]

They sometimes put articles of furniture or clothing in the graves, as a gun for a man, a kettle for a woman; but this is not considered necessary, and arises only from the desire of the relatives to express some marked esteem for the deceased.

the bones cleaned and placed on a shelf on a rack where they were allowed to decay, with no further attention being paid to them. 765

194. Mourning

LINDESTROM said that after the racking of the bones (see under 189) there was a further period of fourteen days of mourning, making the total at least forty-eight days and perhaps longer.

JOHN JOHNSTON—No particular length of time (for mourning).

CAPTAIN PIPE said that widow or widower observed mourning for nine months but practiced elements listed on the table as 195 to 197 inclusive, only during twelve days.

CAPTAIN PIPE, W. T. and E. R. See verbatim accounts given above, pp. 111-14, 116-18.

W. L.—Some terminated the mourning on the fourth day and others on the eleventh or twelfth day. Widow can marry then if she wishes.

195. Widows hair long and unkempt

VAN DER DONCK said that in certain cases the women shaved off their hair when their husbands died.

198. Widows and widowers do not remarry

W. T.—See account given at beginning of this section, p. 117.

199. Termination of mourning

JOHN JOHNSTON—They are affected in the same manner as the whites and their grief wears off by degrees.

W. L.—Widow is attended by some one of the relatives of the deceased up to the fourth, eleventh, or twelfth day and is then washed, dressed in new clothes and turned loose.

200. Visiting of grave.

CAPTAIN CHIPPS said that visits to the graves of deceased friends were frequent and that prayers were made for the salvation of souls of the deceased, but did not say how long they continued. [769]

DELAWARE INDIAN BIG HOUSE CEREMONY

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It is expected that the announcement be made before the members of the tribal council at one of its meetings prior to the time of notification. In the instance of our text Witapano'xwe decided to recite the ceremony as though it were brought in and sponsored by Chief Elk-Hair, the present head chief of the Oklahoma Delawares whom Harrington referred to as an active ceremonial leader in 1910.¹

CONCEPT OF THE SOUL.—A distinction observed between the phraseology of the unconverted and the Christian Delawares in referring to the soul, which has already been mentioned, is of some significance in this connection. The former group employs the term lonape-o'kan "human sign, or evidence of existence." The terminal element, -o'kan appears in combinations lex'le'xe'yo'kan "breath of life, actual life" meaning "my life" (le'xe'yan, "my breathing"), wihila'o'kan "clan-name emblem." Its obscure abstract meaning, however, seems to lie beyond the scope of any specific English equivalent. The Christian Delawares use the term tei'teang giving the significance in Delaware of an image, an appearance visible but without substance, an incorporeal image or phantom as an image in a mirror. The same term actually designates a mirror in the language.

The second term, now of the Christian Delaware religious vernacular, has a wide distribution among eastern Algonkian languages indicating that, while the synonymy noted has taken place in Delaware since the introduction of Christianity, the element tei'teang for soul is an archaic property of the family of tongues.²

We are told that the soul leaves the body twelve days after death, that the life blood ("huk") remains as a spirit on the earth, whence arise ghosts or phantoms. [175]

The heart is the seat of one soul, the blood the seat of another spiritual element. The heart and blood should be kept together after death (for which reason the Delawares do not believe in embalming). The blood of the dead is the element from which the dead reappear to the living on earth in the form of ghosts. It is considered as the cause of paralysis and so was curable through appeal to the dead. We might refer to the funeral rites of the tribe which carry the burial customs over twelve days after death when certain feasting and rites are performed at the home of the deceased. And again these are repeated twelve months later in a yearly ceremonial feast to the dead. At the feast the opposite clan group has an important part to play. [176]

¹ Harrington I, pp. 14, 87.

² A more general term for "life," in Delaware, is pema'usowakan, with the sense of "being among the living."

³ Mitschitchank, Munsee (Brinton, Lenape Dictionary, p. 83): dje'dja'kw, Wabanaki (St. Francis and Penobscot): atca'kw (Montagnais-Naskapi): tei'teung (Mohegan-Pequot): (mi)chachunck, (Natick, where the analogy between soul and mirror is also found (Trumbull, Natick Dictionary, pp. 325, 290, 571); and the same in Narragansett, (Roger Williams, Key to the Indian Language, p. 113); and (mit)tachonk in the Quiripi dialect of western Connecticut.